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# FOREST INCOMES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY(FIFES)

**November 2015-November 2020 | Implementer: ACDI/VOCA**

USAID's Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES) activity is implemented by ACDI/VOCA and sub-grantees Pact and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). FIFES combats deforestation and biodiversity loss while developing rural, forest-based enterprises that provide sustainable economic opportunities for farmers and forest-dependent communities. The Activity contributes to USAID/Liberia's overall sustainable economic growth program to promote equitable and sustainable market-led economic opportunities while improving natural resources management.

FIFES implements biodiversity conservation in 11 community forests (CFs) in Grand Bassa and Nimba counties. To reach this goal, FIFES staff work with local, regional, and national stakeholders to achieve two main objectives:

- 1) to create well-developed rural, forest-based enterprises, which provide sustainable economic opportunities for farmers and forest-dependent communities while combatting deforestation and biodiversity loss, and
- 2) to enhance the capacity of government of Liberia (GoL) institutions and rural communities to sustainably manage and benefit from CF and buffer zone natural resources.

These objectives are reflected in the following three FIFES activity components:

- sustainable, forest-based enterprises developed and strengthened,
- CF management improved, and
- cross-cutting themes of gender, youth, and public outreach

## Current Activities

- Educating Community Forest Management Bodies and community members on the Community Rights Law, the Land Rights Act, and other forest regulations to help them better understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.
- Facilitating the completion of boundary demarcations, forest inventories, and Community Forest Management Plans for 11 Authorized Community Forests in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties
- Supporting national-level civil society groups in organizing advocacy for forest-dependent communities and land rights issues
- Providing technical support for the development of business plans and assisting Authorized Forest Community members obtain start-up funding for enterprises that improve the selection, harvesting, storage, and processing of forest products and sustainable timber.

## Accomplishments to Date

- 54,000 hectares of 11 Authorized Community Forests in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties under improved natural resources management practices
- Over \$8,300,000 LD (US \$59,000) in village savings and loans disbursed through Women Organizing Resources Together (WORTH) Groups, allowing individuals to develop forest enterprises generating more income, with the financial knowledge to manage their investments
- 25 Liberia Forestry Training Institute (FTI) interns deployed to Authorized Community Forests assisting in community engagement, boundary demarcation, forest inventories, and livelihoods development
- Three Forest Development Authority (FDA) seconded field staff dispatched to work in Community Forest Hubs directly with Community Forest Management Bodies
- Cadre of 149 Community Forest Guards recruited and trained to conduct patrols of community forests, protect flora and fauna, and ensure sustainable use of the forest
- 108 agroforestry and forestry enterprise groups established to date, with a focus on developing a culture of business, savings, and independence
- Over 2,000 cocoa, pepper, and peanut farmers trained in improved production, harvest, and storage techniques to increase household income
- 8,000 kg of sustainably produced Grade A cocoa sold by farmers at fair market price
- Methodology developed and approved for forest inventories and community-managed biomonitoring systems, in partnership with the Center for Integrated Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- South-South exchange between Brazil and Liberia to train Liberian Forestry technicians and local stakeholders in the RAPELD forest inventory and biomonitoring methodology
- First Forest Inventory (Sehyi Community Forest) conducted in Africa using the RAPELD methodology

## **Planned Outcomes**

- Build a network of thriving sustainable forest-based enterprises and local governance groups made up of men and women capable of managing forest areas for biodiversity protection and economic benefits
- Increase the capacity of the Government of Liberia to better regulate and manage commercial, community, and conservation activities in Liberia's forests